

# CONSTITUTION

## I. NAME

This body shall be organized as a church corporation known as “Redeemer Church of Abilene” (hereinafter referred to in the Constitution and Bylaws as the “church”).

## II. PURPOSES

This church exists by the grace of God for the glory of God, which shall be the ultimate purpose in all its activities. This church glorifies God by loving Him and obeying His commands through:

Worshiping Him;

Equipping the saints through biblical preaching, instruction, and study;

Proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ through preaching, personal evangelism, and any other means consistent with the teachings of the Scriptures;

Encouraging, supporting, and participating in missions work, local, domestic, and international;

Administering the ordinances of baptism and communion; Encouraging

biblical fellowship among believers; and

Serving other individuals, families, and churches by providing for physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, in the name of Jesus Christ.

## III. STATEMENT OF FAITH

This church affirms the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 for the purpose of identification and cooperation and further adopts the following as our Statement of Faith:

### i. Of the Scriptures

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired, and is a perfect treasure of heavenly instruction; that it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter (inerrant); that it reveals the principles by which God will judge us; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the world, the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

II Tim. 3:16-17; II Tim. 3:15; Proverbs 30:5-6; Romans 2:12; Phil. 3:16; I John 4:1

ii. Of the True God

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, whose name is YAHWEH, the Maker and Supreme Ruler of Heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness, and worthy of all possible honor, confidence, and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; equal in every divine perfection, and distinct in personhood.

John 4:24; Ps. 83:18; Heb.3:4; Rom. 1:20; Jer. 10:10; Ex.15:11; Ps.147:5; Isa.6:3; I Pet.1:15-16; Rev.4:6-8; Mark12:30; Rev.4:11; Matt.10:37; Jer.2:12-13; Matt.28:19; John 15:26; I Cor.12:4-6; I John 5:7; John10:30; John 5:17; John 14:23; John 17:5&10; Acts 5:3-4; I Cor.2:10-11; Phil. 2:5-6; Eph. 2:18; II Cor.13:14; Rev. 1:4-5.

iii. Of the Fall of Man

We believe that man was created in the image of God, under the law of his Maker; but by voluntary transgression fell from that holy and happy state; in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint, but choice; being by nature utterly void of that holiness required by the law of God, positively inclined to evil; and therefore under just condemnation to eternal ruin, without defense or excuse.

Gen.1:27; Gen.1:31; Ecc.7:29; Acts 17:26-29; Gen.2:16-17; Gen.3:6-24; Rom. 5:12; Rom.5:15-19; Ps.51:5; Rom. 8:7; Isa.53:6; Gen.6:12; Rom.3:9-18; Eph.2:1-3; Rom.1:18,32; Rom.2:1-16; Gal.3:10; Matt.20:15; Ezek.18:19-20; Rom.1:20; Rom.3:19; Gal. 3:22.

iv. Of the Way of Salvation

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace, by the mediation of the Son of God; who by the appointment of the Father, freely took upon him our nature, yet without sin; honored the divine law by his personal obedience, and by his death made a full atonement for our sins; that having risen from the death, he is now enthroned in heaven; and uniting in his wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfections, he is every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate, and an all-sufficient Savior.

Eph.2:3, Matt. 18:11, I John4:10, I Cor.3:5-7, Acts 15:11, John 3:16, John1:1-14, Heb. 4:14, Heb. 12:24, Phil. 2:9&14, II Cor. 5:21, Isa. 42:21, Phil. 2:8, Gal. 4:4-5, Rom. 3:21, Isa. 53:4-5, Matt. 20:28, Rom.4:25, Rom.3:21-26, I John 2:3, I Cor. 15:1-3, Heb.9:13-15, Heb.1:8, Heb. 1:3, Col. 3:1-4, Heb. 7:25, Col. 2:18, Heb. 7:26, Ps. 89:19, Ps.34

v. Of Justification

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in him is Justification; that Justification includes the pardon of sin, and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood; by virtue of which faith his perfect righteousness is freely imputed to us of God; that it brings us into a state of most blessed peace and favor with God, and secures every other blessing needful for time and eternity.

John 1:16, Eph.3:8, Acts 13:39, Isa. 53:11-12, Rom5:1-2, Rom. 5:9, Zech. 13:1, Matt. 9:6, Acts 10:43, Rom. 5:17, Titus 3:5-7, I Peter 3:7, I John 2:25, Rom. 5:21, Rom. 4:4-5, Rom. 6:23, Phil. 3:7-9, Rom. 5:19, Rom. 3:24-26, Rom.4:23-25, I John 2:12, Rom. 5:3, Rom. 5:11, I Cor. 1:30-31, Matt. 6:33, I Tim. 4:8

vi. Of the Freeness of Salvation

We believe that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent, and obedient faith; and that nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.

Isa. 55:1, Rev. 22:17, Rom. 16:25-26, Mark 1:15, Rom. 1:15-17, John 5:40, Matt.23:37, Rom.9:32, Pro. 1:24, Acts 13:46, John 3:19, Matt. 11:20, Luke 10:27, II Thess. 1:8

vii. Of Grace in Regeneration

We believe that, in order to be saved, sinners must be regenerated, or born again; that regeneration consists in giving a holy disposition to the mind; that it is effected in a manner above our comprehension by the power of the Holy Spirit, in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; and that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance, and faith, and newness of life.

John 3:3, John 3:6-7, I Cor.3:14, Rev.14:3, Rev. 21:27, II Cor. 5:17, Ezek. 36:26, Deu. 30-6, Rom. 2:28-29, Rom. 5:5, I John 4:7, John 3:8, John 1:13, James 1:16-18, I Cor. 1:30, Phil. 2:13, I Peter 1:22-25, I John 5:1, Eph. 4:20-24, Col. 3:9-11, Eph. 5:9, Rom. 8:90, Gal. 5:16-23, Eph. 3:14-21, Matt. 3:8-10, Matt.7:20, I John 5:4, 18

viii. Of Repentance and Faith

We believe that Repentance and Faith are sacred duties, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the regenerating Spirit of God; whereby being deeply convinced of our guilt, danger, and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession, and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and relying on him alone as the only and all-sufficient Savior.

Mark 1:15, Acts 11:18, Eph. 2:8, I John 5:1, John 16:8, Acts 2:37-38, Acts 16:30-31 Luke 18:13, Luke 15:18-21, James 4:7-10, II Cor. 7:11, Tim. 10:12-13, Ps.51, Rom. 10:9-11, Acts 3:22-23, Heb. 4:14, Ps.2:6, Heb. 1:8, Heb. 7:25, II Tim. 1:12

ix. Of God's Purpose of Grace

We believe that Election is the eternal purpose of God, according to which he graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves sinners; that being perfectly consistent with the free agency of man, it comprehends all the means in connection with the end; that it is a most glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, being infinitely free, wise, holy, and unchangeable; that it utterly excludes boasting, and promotes humility, love, prayer, praise, trust in God, and active imitation of his free mercy; that it encourages the use of means in the highest degree; that it may be ascertained by its effects in all who truly believe the gospel; that it is the foundation of Christian assurance; and that to ascertain it with regard to ourselves demands and deserves the utmost diligence.

II Tim. 1:8-9; Eph. 1:3-14; I Peter 1:1-2; Rom. 11:5-6; John 15:16; I John 4:19; II Thess. 2:13-14; Acts 13:48; John 10:16; Matt. 20:16; Acts 15:14; Ex. 33:18-19; Matt. 20:15; Eph. 1:11; Rom. 9:23-24; Jer. 31:3; Rom. 11:28-29; James 1:17-18; II Tim. 1:9; Rom. 11:32-36; I Cor. 1:26-31; Rom. 3:27; Rom. 4:16; Col. 3:12; I Cor. 3:5-7; I Cor. 15:10; I Peter 5:10; Acts 1:24; I Thess. 2:13; I Peter 2:9; Luke 18:7; John 15:16; I Thess. 2:12; II Tim. 2:10; I Cor. 9:22; Rom. 8:28-30; John 6:37-40; I Thess. 1:4-10; Isa. 42:16; Rom. 11:29; II Peter 1:10-11; Phil. 3:12; Heb. 6:11

x. Of Sanctification

We believe that Sanctification is the process by which, according to the will of God, we are made partakers of his holiness; that it is a progressive work; that it is begun in regeneration; and that it is carried on in the hearts of believers by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, the Sealer and Comforter, in the continual use of the appointed means—especially the Word of God, self-examination, self-denial, watchfulness, and prayer.

I Thess. 4:3; I Thess. 5:23; II Cor. 7:1; II Cor. 13:10; Phil. 3:12-16; I John 2:29; Rom. 8:5; Eph. 1:4; Pro. 4:18; II Cor. 3:18; Heb. 6:1; II Peter 1:5-8; John 3:6; Phil. 1:9-11; Eph. 1:13-14; Phil. 2:12-13; Eph. 4:11-12; I Peter 2:2; II Peter 3:18; II Cor. 13:5; Luke 11:35; Luke 9:23; Matt. 26:41; Eph. 6:18; Eph. 4:30

xi. Of the Perseverance of Saints

We believe that only those who are real believers endure to the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

John 8:31; I John 2:27-28; I John 3:9; I John 5:18; I John 2:19; John 13:18; Matt. 13:20-21; John 6:66-69; Job 17:9; Rom. 8:28; Matt. 6:30-33; Jer. 32:40; Ps. 121:3; Ps. 91:11-12; Phil. 1:6; Phil. 2:13; Jude 24:25; Heb. 1:14; II Kings 6:16; Heb. 13:5; I John 4:4

xii. Of the Harmony of the Law and the Gospel

We believe that the Law of God is the eternal and unchangeable rule of his moral government; that it is holy, just, and good; and that the inability which the Scriptures ascribe to fallen men to fulfill its precepts arises entirely from their love of sin; to deliver them from which, and to restore them through a Mediator to unfeigned obedience to the holy Law, is one great end of the Gospel, and of the means of grace connected with the establishment of the visible Church.

Rom. 3:31; Matt. 5:17; Luke 16:17; Rom. 3:20; Rom. 4:15; Rom. 7:12; Rom. 7:7,14-22; Gal. 3:21; Ps. 119; Rom. 8:7-8; Josh. 24:19; Jer. 13:23; John 6:44; John 5:44; Rom. 8:2-4; Rom. 10:4; I Tim. 1:5; Heb. 8:10; Jude 20-21

xiii. Of a Gospel Church

We believe that a visible church of Christ is a congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by his laws, and exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by his Word; that its only scriptural officers are elders (or pastors) and deacons, whose qualifications, claims, and duties are defined in the Epistles to Timothy and Titus.

I Cor. 1:1-3; Matt. 18:17; Acts 5:11; Acts 8:1; Acts 11:21-23; I Cor. 4:17; I Cor. 14:23; III John 9; I Tim. 3:5; Acts 2:41-42; II Cor. 8:5; Acts 2:47; I Cor. 5:12-13; I Cor. 11:2; II Thess. 3:6; Rom. 16:17-20; I Cor. 11:23-24; Matt. 18:15-20; I Cor. 5:6; II Cor. 2:17; I Cor. 4:17; Matt. 28:20; John 14:15; John 15:12; I John 14:21; I Thess. 4:2; II John 6; Gal. 6:2; Eph. 4:7; I Cor. 14:12; Phil. 1:1; Acts 14:23; Acts 15:22; I Tim. 3; Titus 1

xiv. Of Baptism and the Lord's Supper

We believe that Christian Baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, into the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit; to show forth, in a solemn and beautiful emblem, our faith in the crucified, buried, and risen Savior, and our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation; and to the Lord's Supper, in which the members of the church, by the sacred use of bread and wine, are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination.

Acts 8:36-39; Matt. 3:5-6; John 3:22-23; John 4:12; Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:12; Acts 16:32-34; Acts 18:8; Acts 10:47-48; Gal. 3:26-28; Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12; I Peter 3:20-21; Acts 22:16; Acts 2:41-42; I Cor. 11:26; Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:14-20; I Cor. 11:28; I Cor. 5:1-8; I Cor. 10:3-32; I Cor. 11:17-32; John 6:26

xv. Of the Lord's Day

We believe that the first day of the week is the Lord's Day; that this is the day when churches in the New Testament met for distinctly Christian worship and edification in remembrance of our Lord's resurrection; and that Sunday is set aside for the church's gathering to those ends.

Acts 20:7; Gen. 2:3; Col. 2:16-17; Mark 2:27; John 20:19; I Cor. 16:1-2; Ex. 20:8; Rev. 1:10; Ps. 118:15, 24; Isa. 58:13-14; Isa. 56:2-8; Heb. 10:24-25; Acts 11:26; Acts 13:44; Lev. 19:30; Luke 4:16; Acts 17:2-3; Ps. 26:8; Ps. 87:3; Heb. 4:3-11

xvi. Of Humanity and God's Design

We believe that God created Adam and Eve, the first human beings, in his own image, equal before God as persons, and distinct as male and female; that divinely ordained differences between male and female reflect God's original creation design and are meant for human good and human flourishing; that God has designed marriage to be a covenantal, sexual, procreative, lifelong union of one man and one woman, as husband and wife, and is meant to signify the covenant love between Christ and his bride, the Church; and that God's revealed will for all people is chastity outside of marriage and fidelity within marriage.

Gen. 1:26-28; Gen. 2:15-25; Gen. 3:1-24; Ex. 20:14,17; Lev. 18:22, 20:13; Job 31:1; Pro. 5:1-23; Matt. 5:27-30; Matt. 19:4-6,8-9; Rom. 1:26-27, 32; I Cor. 6:9-11, 18-20; I Cor. 7:1-7; Eph. 5:31-32; I Thess. 4:2-8; I Tim. 1:9-10; II Tim. 2:22; Heb. 13:4; James 1:14-15; I Peter 2:11; Jude 7

xvii. Of Civil Government

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment; and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth.

Rom. 13:1-7; Deu. 16:18; II Sam. 23:3; Ex. 18:23; Jer. 30:21; Matt. 22:21; Titus 3:1; I Peter 2:13; I Tim. 2:1-4; Acts 5:29; Matt.28; Dan. 3:15-18; Dan. 6:7-10; Acts 4:18-20; Matt. 23:10; Rom. 14:4; Rev. 19:16; Ps.72:11; Ps.2; Rom. 14:9-13

xviii. Of the Righteous and the Wicked

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that only those who through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in his esteem; while all those who continue in impenitence and unbelief are in his sight wicked, and under the curse; and this distinction holds among men both in and after death.

Mal. 3:18; Pro. 12:26; Isa. 5:20; Gen. 18:23; Jer. 15:19; Acts 10:34-35; Rom. 6:16; Rom. 1:17; Rom. 7:6; I John 2:29; I John 3:7; Rom. 6:18,22; I Cor. 11:32; Pro. 11:31; I Peter 4:17-18; I John 5:19; Gal. 3:10; John 3:36; Isa. 57:21; Ps. 10:4; Isa. 55:6-7; Pro. 14:32; Luke 16:25; John 8:21-24; Pro. 10:24; Luke 12:4-5; Luke 9:23-26; Ecc. 3:17; Matt. 7:13-14

xix. Of the World to Come

We believe that the end of the world is approaching; that at the last day Christ will descend from heaven, and raise the dead from the grave to final retribution; that a solemn separation will then take place; that the wicked will be adjudged to endless punishment, and the righteous to endless joy; and that this judgment will fix forever the final state of men in heaven or hell, on principles of righteousness.

I Peter 4:7; I Cor. 7:29-31; Heb. 1:10-12; Matt. 24:35; I John 2:17; Matt. 28:20; Matt. 13:39-40; II Peter 3:3-13; Acts 1:11; Rev. 1:7; Heb. 9:28; Acts 3:21; I Thess 4:13-18; I Thess. 5:1-11; Acts 24:15; I Cor. 15:12-58; Luke 14:14; Dan. 12:2; John 5:28-29; John 6:40; John 11:25-26; II Tim. 1:10; Acts 10:42; Matt. 13:49; Matt. 13:37-43; Matt. 24:30-31; Matt. 25:31-46; Rev. 22:11; I Cor. 6:9-10; Mark 9:43-48; II Peter 2:9; Jude 7; Phil. 3:19; Rom. 6:23; II Cor. 5:10-11; John 4:36; II Cor. 4:18; Rom. 3:5-6; II Thess. 1:6-12; Heb. 6:1-2; I Cor. 4:5; Acts 17:31; Rom. 2:2-16; Rev. 20:11-12; I John 2:28; I John 4:17; II Peter 3:11-12

\* Adapted from the New Hampshire Confession of Faith

#### IV. CHURCH COVENANT

This church adopts the following as our church covenant:

Having, as we trust, been brought by divine grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to give ourselves up to him, and having been baptized upon our profession of faith, in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit, we do now, relying on His gracious aid, solemnly and joyfully covenant with each other.

1. We will work and pray for the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. (Eph 4:3)
2. We will be devoted to one another in brotherly love. With humility and gentleness we will patiently bear with each other, forgiving, encouraging and building one another up, refusing to gossip or complain, exercising watchfulness over each other, and admonishing one another when necessary. (Luke 17:3; Col 3:13; 1 Thes 5:11; 1 Pet 1:22)
3. We will not neglect to gather together, or to pray for ourselves and others. (Col 4:2; Heb 10:25)
4. We promise to bring up our children in the training and instruction of the Lord, and by a pure and loving example to seek the salvation of our family and friends. (Eph 6:4; 1 Pet 3:1)
5. We will rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep, helping to carry each other's burdens. (Rom 12:15)
6. We will seek, by God's help, to live carefully in this world, denying ungodliness and worldly passions. We will strive to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age, as we wait for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. (Titus 2:12; 1 Pet 1:14)
7. We affirm our church's Statement of Faith.
8. We will defend and maintain an evangelical ministry in this church by supporting and upholding;
  - The preaching of the Word of God (2 Tim 4:2)
  - The administration of the Gospel ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper (Acts 2:38; 1 Cor 11:26)
  - The exercise of Church Membership and Discipline (Matt 18:17; 1 Cor 5:13)
9. We will submit to our Elders as they keep watch over our souls (Heb. 13:17)
10. We will contribute cheerfully, generously, and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations. (Matt 28:19; Luke 12:33; 2 Cor 9:7)
11. We will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible unite with some other gospel preaching church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen. (2 Cor 13:14)



## V. AMENDMENTS

The Constitution may be amended at any regular or special meeting of the church by a three-fourths majority vote of the members present, provided (a) the proposed amendment is presented at a previous members' meeting, and mailed or made available to the members at least four weeks before the meeting to act on the amendment; and (b) the meeting to consider the proposed amendment is announced at all Sunday morning services on two consecutive Sundays before the vote is taken, one of which may be the same day as the meeting.

# BYLAWS

## ARTICLE 1 MEMBERSHIP

### Section 1 – Qualifications

To qualify for membership in this church, a person must be a believer in Jesus Christ who gives evidence of regeneration, who has been baptized in obedience to Christ, following his or her regeneration, and who wholeheartedly believes in the Christian faith as revealed in the Bible. Each member must affirm the teaching of Scripture as expressed in the Statement of Faith and must promise to keep the commitments expressed in the Church Covenant. The elders shall be responsible for determining each person's qualification for membership. In making this determination, they may rely on a person's profession of faith, or such other evidence as the elders deem appropriate.

### Section 2 – Admission

To be admitted into church membership, applicants shall be recommended by the elders for admission and accepted by a three-fourths majority vote of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members. Upon admission, all applicants shall relinquish their membership in any other churches.

### Section 3 – Duties and Privileges

In accordance with the duties enumerated in the Church Covenant, each member shall be privileged and expected to participate in and contribute to the ministry and life of the church, consistent with God's leading and with the gifts, time, and material resources each has received from God. Only members shall be entitled to serve in the ministries of the church; non-members may serve on an ad hoc basis with the approval of the elders. Nevertheless, non-members may serve the church for purposes of administration and professional consultation.

Under Christ, this congregation is led by elders who are held accountable by its members. Therefore, it is the privilege and responsibility of members to attend members' meetings and vote on such matters as may be submitted to a vote.

Members are expected to be in voluntary submission to the doctrinal position of the church and the elders as those elders carry out the functions of their office.

Members are responsible to abide by the consensus of the church body regarding matters of faith and practice as expressed in the Constitution and Bylaws and agree to submit to the policies and procedures duly developed in support of the Constitution and Bylaws as provided in Article 9.

No member of this church, nor any officer, nor any member of the board of directors shall by virtue of such membership, office, or position, incur or be subject to personal liability to any extent for any indebtedness, obligations, acts, or omissions of this church corporation.

#### Section 4 – Voting

The following matters shall be presented to the members at a regular or special members' meeting for a vote, and shall be deemed approved upon obtaining the requisite majority indicated.

- (a) The Annual Budget. A simple majority vote is required.
- (b) Admission into, or termination of, membership. A three-fourths majority vote is required.
- (c) Election of officers other than elders. A simple majority vote is required for all offices except elder.
- (d) Election or dismissal of elders. A three-fourths majority vote is required.
- (e) Calling of pastors. A three-fourths majority vote is required.
- (f) Acquisition or sale of real property, building projects, or indebtedness secured by the real property of the church. A three-fourths majority vote is required.
- (g) Amendments to the Constitution or Bylaws. A three-fourths majority vote is required.
- (h) Dissolution of the church corporation or the disposition of all, or substantially all, of the church assets. A three-fourths majority vote is required.
- (i) Any other decision brought before a regular or special members' meeting for vote. A simple majority vote is required unless otherwise provided in the Constitution or Bylaws.

Only the votes of members present shall be counted in determining whether the requisite majority is obtained. Abstentions shall be counted as negative votes. Voting by proxy or absentee ballot is not permitted.

Voting method shall be determined by the elders but shall not be anonymous.

#### Section 5 – Church Discipline

Any member consistently neglectful of his or her duties as embodied in the Church Covenant or the Constitution and Bylaws, or guilty of conduct by which the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be dishonored, and so opposing the welfare of the church, shall be subject to the admonition of the elders and the discipline of the church, according to the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15–17 and the example of Scripture. Church discipline, then, should ordinarily be contemplated after individual private admonition has failed.

If private efforts to bring about the member's repentance and reconciliation are unsuccessful, one or more members or elders shall bring the matter to the attention of the elder board. The elders shall review and investigate the matter, and, if they believe it is warranted, may also conduct a hearing with notice of the charges and process. After prayer and deliberation, the elders may (a) dismiss the matter, (b) take disciplinary action (other than termination of membership, which may only be effected by a vote of the members), or (c) submit the matter (with or without a recommendation for action) to the members at a regular or special meeting for a decision. If the elders fail or refuse to act on the matter, the members may bring it up for consideration and vote at a special members' meeting called in accordance with Article 2, Section 2.

If the elders or the members vote to discipline the member, it may be announced to the members to carry out the Biblical admonition to bring about repentance and restoration of the disciplined member. Members who have been excommunicated by the church shall be restored to full membership privileges according to the spirit of 2 Corinthians 2:7-8 when their conduct is judged by the elders and the members to be in accordance with the Statement of Faith, Church Covenant, and Biblical repentance. The elders will recommend such restoration to the church at a regular or special meeting. A three-fourths majority vote is required to restore a disciplined member.

Church discipline can include admonition by the elders or congregation, deposition from office, and excommunication (see Matthew 18:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5).

The purposes of such discipline should be

For the repentance, reconciliation, and spiritual growth of the individual disciplined;

See Proverbs 15:5; 29:15; 1 Corinthians 4:14; Ephesians 6:4; 1 Timothy 3:4-5; Hebrews 12:1-11; Psalm 119:115; 141:5; Proverbs 17:10; 25:12; 27:5; Ecclesiastes 7:5; Matthew 7:26-27; 18:15-17; Luke 17:3; Acts 2:40; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1-5; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15; 1 Timothy 1:20; Titus 1:13-14; James 1:22.

For the instruction in righteousness and good of other Christians, as an example to them;

See Proverbs 13:20; Romans 15:14; 1 Corinthians 5:11; 15:33; Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 1:11; Hebrews 10:24-25.

For the purity of the church as a whole;

See 1 Corinthians 5:6-7; 2 Corinthians 13:10; Ephesians 5:27; 2 John 10; Jude 24; Revelation 21:2.

For the good of our corporate witness to non-Christians; and

See Proverbs 28:7; Matthew 5:13-16; John 13:35; Acts 5:1-14; Ephesians 5:11; 1 Timothy 3:7; 2 Peter 2:2; 1 John 3:10. Supremely for the glory of God by reflecting His holy character.

See Deuteronomy 5:11; 1 Kings 11:2; 2 Chronicles 19:2; Ezra 6:21; Nehemiah 9:2; Isaiah 52:11; Ezekiel 36:20; Matthew 5:16; John 15:8; 18:17, 25; Romans 2:24; 15:5-6; 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1; Ephesians 1:4; 5:27; 1 Peter 2:12.

## Section 6 – Termination

Termination of membership in this church occurs:

- (a) When the church, at a regular or special members' meeting, recognizes the voluntary resignation of a member or their joining of another church.
- (b) Upon the death of the member; or
- (c) As an act of church discipline, when a three-fourths majority of the members present and voting at a regular or special member's meeting vote to terminate the membership of the member.

## ARTICLE 2

### WORSHIP SERVICES AND MEETINGS

#### Section 1 – Worship Services

Worship services shall be held on the Lord's Day, and may be held throughout the week as the church determines.

#### Section 2 – Members' Meetings

In every meeting together, members shall act in a spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration, which is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Regular Meetings. There shall be a regular members' meeting at least every other month, beginning in January, at some time apart from a public worship service as agreed upon by the membership.

Special Meetings. Special members' meetings may be called as required by the elders, or at the written request of at least five percent of the membership of the church. Any request for a special members' meeting shall be signed by the members requesting the meeting and mailed or delivered in person to the elders. The elders shall call a special meeting to be held within one month of their receipt of the request.

The elders shall see that the stated meetings of the church are regularly held and that required reports are submitted to the church by the responsible members.

Place. Business meetings of the members shall be held at the church meeting place or at such other place as may be designated by the elders in the meeting notice.

Notice. Written notice of the date and time of regular meetings shall be given at least ten (10) but not more than sixty (60) days before the meeting date. Written notice of the date, time, and purpose of any special meeting shall be given at least ten (10) but not more than sixty (60) days before the meeting date.

Notices of regular or special meetings may be delivered in person; by mail or other method of delivery; or by telephone, voice mail, email, or other electronic means. Notice by electronic transmission constitutes written notice. Any telephone numbers, email addresses, or other electronic contact information provided to the church by a member may be used for notice purposes; provided, however, such electronic contact information may be changed by the member at any time by providing written notice to the clerk or church administrator.

Quorum. Those members present at a members' meeting duly noticed and called shall constitute a quorum of the membership for the transaction of business.

Moderator. An elder designated by the elders shall preside as moderator at all members' meetings of the church.

Minutes. Minutes of the regular and special members' meetings shall be taken and kept in the church records under the custody of the clerk.

Business. The members shall consider such matters as may be presented at the members' meetings. At any regular or special members' meeting, officers may be elected and positions filled as needed, so long as all relevant requirements of the Constitution and Bylaws have been met. A budget for a new fiscal year shall be approved by the membership at a members' meeting not more than one month after the start of the fiscal year.

Voting. Unless otherwise provided in the Constitution or Bylaws, matters presented to the members for vote shall be decided by a simple majority vote of the members present at the members' meeting.

## ARTICLE 3 OFFICERS

### Section 1 – Summary

The Biblical offices in the church are elders (or pastors) and deacons. In addition to the officers, the church will recognize other administrative positions as needed in the life of the church (e.g., clerk & treasurer). All officers must be members of this church prior to assuming their responsibilities.

### Section 2 – Elders

Number and Qualifications. The authorized number of elders shall be such number as may from time to time be authorized by the elders, but in no fewer than three. Should circumstances arise that leave the church with fewer than three elders, the remaining elders shall act as soon as possible to propose qualified elders to the congregation.

Elders shall be men who satisfy the qualifications for the office of elder set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:6–9. No elder may hold the office of deacon during his tenure.

Further, elders shall acknowledge and affirm the ‘Redeemer Church Theological Heritage’ (see Addendum A) before being recommended to the church.

Duties. In keeping with the principles set forth in Acts 6:1–6 and 1 Peter 5:1–4, the elders shall devote their time to prayer, the ministry of the Word (by teaching and encouraging sound doctrine), and shepherding God’s flock. Subject to the accountability of the congregation, the elders shall oversee the ministry and resources of the church.

The elders shall take particular responsibility to examine and instruct prospective members, examine and recommend all prospective candidates for offices and positions, oversee the work of the deacons and appointed church agents and teams, conduct worship services, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, equip the membership for the work of the ministry, encourage sound doctrine and practice, admonish and correct error, oversee the process of church discipline, coordinate and promote the ministries of the church, and mobilize the church for world missions.

The elders are further to ensure that all who minister the Word to the congregation, including outside speakers, share our fundamental convictions. The elders may establish ministry positions or teams to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities. The elders may also propose funding for new paid non-pastoral staff positions. The scope and approval of job descriptions for any staff position shall reside in the hands of those with hiring authority for that position. The elders shall have primary responsibility for the employment, supervision, and evaluation of staff members. This responsibility may, on a case-by-case basis, be delegated to another staff member.

In addition, the elders shall designate one of their number to serve as President of the Corporation to fulfill state law.

Meetings. The elders shall elect a chairman of elders’ meetings and shall also designate one of their number to serve as moderator of members’ meetings. Meetings of the elders shall be conducted in accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws and any procedures adopted by the elders. Unless otherwise provided by the Constitution and Bylaws or any procedures adopted by the elders, the act of the majority of the elders present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the elders.

Participation by Conference Telephone. Elders may participate in a meeting of the elders or any committee by means of a conference telephone or similar communications equipment whereby all persons participating in the meeting can hear each other. Participation by such means shall constitute presence in person at such meeting. When such a meeting is conducted by means of a conference telephone or similar communications equipment, a written record shall be made of the action taken at such meeting, noting participation of those who were present by means of such communications equipment.

Action without Meeting. Any action required or permitted to be taken by the elders may be taken without a meeting, if all of the elders, individually or collectively, consent in writing (which may be in digital format) to the action. Such action by written consent shall have the same force and effect as the unanimous vote of the elders. Such written consent or consents shall be filed with, or recorded in, the minutes of the proceedings of the elders.

Minutes. Minutes of the meetings of the elders shall be recorded and circulated to the elders in a timely manner.

Quorum. A quorum of elders shall consist of three-fourths of the elders of the church.

Election. The church shall recognize, in accordance with Article 5, Section 2 of the Bylaws, men gifted and willing to serve in the calling of elder. These men shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as elders. These men shall be nominated by the church at a time deemed appropriate by the elders. These men shall then be screened and recommended to the church by the elders. Elders serve as long as they continue to remain qualified for the office or as deemed appropriate by the elders.

Termination. An elder may be terminated by resignation or by dismissal. Any two members with reason to believe that an elder should be dismissed should express such concern first to the elders and thereafter, if need be, to the congregation at any regular or special members' meeting. Any such action shall be done in accordance with the instructions of our Lord in Matthew 18:15–17 and 1 Timothy 5:17–21. Any of the elders may be dismissed by a three-fourths majority vote of the members present at any regular or special meeting of the members.

### Section 3 – Deacons

Qualifications and Duties. A deacon shall be a church member who satisfies the requirements and description in 1 Timothy 3:8–13 and Acts 6:1–7. Deacons shall care for the temporal needs of members, attend to the accommodations for public worship, and encourage and support those able to help others and those with gifts of administration. The deacons, with the agreement of the elders, may establish unpaid administrative positions or teams of members to assist them in fulfilling their responsibilities in the church.

Election. The church shall recognize, in accordance with Article 5, Section 2 of the Bylaws, men who are giving of themselves in service to the church, and who possess particular gifts of service. These members shall be received as gifts of Christ to His church and set apart as deacons. They shall be nominated by the church at a time deemed appropriate by the elders. They shall be screened and then recommended to the church by the elders for vote.

### Section 4 – Clerk and Treasurer

These positions may be filled by an elder or deacon or other trusted member of the congregation who is a member and is appointed by the elders and approved by the congregation annually.



Clerk. The clerk shall be responsible for recording the minutes of all members' meetings of the church, preserving an accurate roll of the membership, and rendering reports as requested by the pastor, the elders, the deacons, or the church. The church clerk also shall ensure that dated copies of the most recent version of the Constitution and Bylaws are available for all members. In the absence or incapacity of the clerk, the elders shall appoint another member to perform the duties of the clerk. The clerk shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the members to serve a term of one year, or until a successor is elected.

Treasurer. The treasurer shall ensure that all funds and securities of the church are properly secured in the name of the church in such banks, financial institutions, or depositories as appropriate. The treasurer also shall keep full and accurate accounts of receipts and disbursements in books belonging to the church, and implement adequate controls to ensure that all funds belonging to the church are appropriately handled by any officer, employee, or agent of the church. The treasurer shall be responsible for presenting regular reports of the account balances, revenues, and expenses of the church at each regular members' meeting; this responsibility may be delegated with the approval of the elders. The treasurer shall render to the elders an account of all transactions as treasurer and of the financial condition of the church as requested by the elders, but in any event at least annually. The treasurer shall be nominated by the elders and elected by the members to serve a term of one year, or until a successor is elected.

#### ARTICLE 4 PASTORAL STAFF

##### Section 1 – Lead Pastor

The lead pastor shall be an elder. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Article 3, Section 2, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. His call shall be defined as per Article 5, Section 3. He shall normally preach on the Lord's Day, administer the ordinances of baptism and communion, and perform such other duties as usually pertain to that office, or as set forth in the Constitution. In the absence or incapacity of the lead pastor, the elders shall assume responsibility for his duties, any of which may be delegated.

##### Section 2 – Associate Pastor(s)

The church may call additional pastor(s) whose relationship to the lead pastor is that of associate. An associate pastor shall be an elder unless the number of staff elders would exceed the number of non-staff elders. He shall perform the duties of an elder described in Article 3, Section 2, and shall be recognized by the church as particularly gifted and called to the full-time ministry of preaching and teaching. His call shall be defined as per Article 5, Section 4. He shall assist the lead pastor in the performance of his regular duties and shall perform any other duties as usually pertain to the office of pastor, or as set forth in the Constitution, or which may be specifically assigned to him by the congregation. In the absence or incapacity of the lead pastor for defined periods of time (such as sabbatical or illness), the associate pastor(s) shall assume the responsibility for his duties under the oversight of the elders.

### Section 3 – Other Staff or Assistant(s)

The church may call additional staff or assistants as deemed necessary by the elders. These may be recognized as elders should they be nominated by the elders and elected by the congregation in accordance with Article 3, Section 2. These may be paid or unpaid. The elders shall define the responsibilities of other staff or assistant(s).

## ARTICLE 5 ELECTIONS

### Section 1 – Principles

The process for church elections shall be interpreted and carried out to fulfill the following principles:

- Substantial prayer, both individually and corporately, should be an integral part of the election process;
- Nominations should proceed with the support of the elders;
- All candidates for church office should be treated with the grace, kindness, and honesty appropriate in evaluating fellow members;
- The election process shall express that spirit of mutual trust, openness, and loving consideration that is appropriate within the body of our Lord Jesus Christ.

### Section 2 – Selection of Officers

The election of officers shall be held at a members' meeting of the church. The church shall be responsible for nominating candidates to serve as officers of the church. The elders shall screen candidates and then recommend them to the church. Names of nominees to serve as elders, deacons, clerk, or treasurer shall appear on the meeting notice, and the election shall proceed as directed by the moderator. Any member with reason to believe that a nominated candidate is unqualified for an office should express such concern to the elders. Members intending to speak in opposition to a candidate should express their objection to the elders as far in advance as possible before the relevant church members' meeting.

For the office of elder, the moderator shall declare elected all men receiving three-fourths majority vote of the members present. For all other offices, the moderator shall declare elected all persons receiving a simple majority vote of the members present. The persons elected shall assume their respective offices upon election, unless another date has been specifically designated.

### Section 3 – Calling of the Lead Pastor

In the calling of any man to the position of lead pastor, the same process of calling an elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential lead pastor and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant. Notice of the nomination of a man to be elected to membership and called as lead pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of his wife if he is married) must be given at all church services on two Sundays following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

### Section 4 – Calling of an Associate Pastor

In the calling of any man to the position of associate pastor, the same process of calling an elder must be followed. In addition, however, the church must be given adequate opportunity to assess the preaching gifts of any potential associate pastor and, before being asked to express its judgment, must receive assurance from the elders that, having interviewed the man concerned, they are in no doubt as to his wholehearted assent to the Statement of Faith and Church Covenant. Notice of the nomination of a man to be called as associate pastor (which shall include, if necessary, election to membership of him and his wife if he is married) must be given at all church services on two Sundays following the nomination, prior to the vote at a members' meeting.

## ARTICLE 6 FINANCES

### Section 1 – Summary

The elders shall present an operations and missions budget for approval by the membership at a member's meeting not more than one month after the start of the fiscal year. Prior to this approval and subject to the elder's discretion, expenditures may continue at the prior year's level.

### Section 2 - Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the church shall begin January first and end December thirty-first.

ARTICLE 7  
COOPERATION

Section 1 – Summary

We believe that local churches can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in a denominational organization. Such an organization, whether a local, state, or national convention, exists and functions by the will of the churches.

Section 2 - Affiliations

This church chooses to affiliate with the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention for the purpose of cooperation with like-minded churches for the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Cooperation in a convention is voluntary and may be terminated at any time.

ARTICLE 8  
DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Believing that the Bible commands Christians to make every effort to live at peace and to resolve disputes with each other in private or within the Christian Church (see, e.g., Matthew 18:15–20, 1 Corinthians 6:1–8), the church expects its members to resolve conflict among themselves according to biblically-based principles, without reliance on the secular courts. Consistent with its call to peacemaking, the church shall follow biblically-based principles and seek to avoid lawsuits to resolve disputes between itself and those outside the church, whether Christian or pagan and whether individuals or corporate entities. The elders shall adopt policies and procedures to effect these requirements and aspirations.

ARTICLE 9  
INDEMNIFICATION

Section 1 – Mandatory

If a legal claim or criminal allegation is made against a person because he or she is or was a director, officer, employee, or agent of the church, the church shall provide indemnification against liability and costs incurred in defending against the claim if the elders determine that the person acted (a) in good faith, (b) with the care an ordinarily prudent person in a similar position would exercise under similar circumstances, and (c) in a manner the person reasonably believed to be in the best interest of the church, and the person had no reasonable cause to believe his or her conduct was unlawful.

Section 2 – Permissive

With the unanimous decision of the elders, the church also may indemnify any person who acted in good faith and reasonably believed that his or her conduct was in the church's best interest and not unlawful.

Section 3 – Determinations

If a quorum of the elders is not available for an indemnification determination because of the number of elders seeking indemnification, the requisite determination may be made by the membership or by special legal counsel appointed by the membership.

ARTICLE 10  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The elders and any of their designees shall be responsible for overseeing the development, maintenance and periodic review of policies and procedures for the day-to-day functions of the Church. Such policies and procedures shall be maintained in a Policies and Procedures Manual, which shall be available at the Church office for members to review.

ARTICLE 11  
DISSOLUTION AND DISBURSEMENT OF ASSETS

The church may be dissolved or merged with another congregation by a two-thirds majority of members present and voting at a meeting called for this purpose, subsequent to at least two weeks notice following the recommendation of the elders, or a motion proposed and adopted by the congregation at any regular or appropriately called special members' meeting.

In the event of dissolution of the church, no part of the church's earnings or assets shall inure to the benefit of any of its members; the residual assets of the church shall be distributed to the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention which is exempt as organizations described in Sections 501(c)(3) and 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue code, or corresponding sections of any prior or future law, or to the federal, state or local government exclusively for public purpose. Alternatively, a two-thirds majority of members present and voting at the meeting of dissolution may designate any portion or all assets to one or more organizations which themselves are exempt as organizations described in Sections 501(c)(3) and 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue code, or corresponding sections of any prior or future law, or to the federal, state or local government exclusively for public purpose.

## ARTICLE 12 AMENDMENTS

The Bylaws may be adopted or amended at any regular or special meeting of the church by a three-fourths majority vote of all members present, provided (a) the proposed amendment is presented at a previous members' meeting, and mailed or made available to the members at least four weeks before the meeting to act on the amendment; and (b) the meeting to consider the proposed amendment is announced at all Sunday morning services on two consecutive Sundays before the vote is taken, one of which may be the same day as the meeting.

## ADDENDUM A THEOLOGICAL HERITAGE

Our Statement of Faith (modified 1833 New Hampshire Confession) puts forth a concise and clear declaration of what we believe as a church based on God's revelation to us in the Scriptures. The Statement of Faith is not an exhaustive explanation of our beliefs, but it highlights and summarizes beliefs we deem as essential to membership of this local body and faithfulness to our Lord.

In addition to our Statement of Faith we joyfully stand alongside our brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the ages in affirming the Apostles' Creed (2nd Century), the Nicene Creed (325 and 381), the Chalcedonian Creed (451 AD) and the Athanasian Creed (late 5th or early 6th century).

Our church's teaching falls within the tradition of the Reformation, and as such we acknowledge and believe "the five solas" that often summarize the teaching of the Reformation: We believe that SCRIPTURE ALONE provides the foundation and knowledge of our salvation; that salvation was purchased by CHRIST ALONE, and applied to those who repent and believe in Christ by GRACE ALONE, through FAITH ALONE. We believe that salvation, and all of life, is worked out in us to the GLORY OF GOD ALONE, which is the chief end of mankind.

The teaching of the church is also reflected by our statement of Theological Distinctives, which explains key defining theological traits of Redeemer Church and can be found in our Redeemer 101 membership class curriculum.

Our theological heritage is derived from the Second London Baptist Confession (1689) which provides helpful expositions of God's Word. In our desire to protect our church from modern false teaching we affirm the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978), The Danvers Statement on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (1987) and The Nashville Statement on Human Sexuality (2017).

For the purpose of cooperation and identification we affirm the Baptist Faith and Message (2000), Together for the Gospel Affirmations and Denials (2006) and The Gospel Coalition Foundation Documents (2007, 2011).

Any area of controversy or discrepancy with regard to any of these documents will be decided by the elders of Redeemer Church.

Our church exists to glorify God by making disciples of Jesus Christ and teaching them to obey all that Christ commanded us. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all. Amen.